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Illinois would be a national "laughingstock" if state leaders keep feuding over how to finance a statewide construction program and blow an October deadline to get \$9 billion in federal matching funds, Rep. Mark Kirk said Monday.

"Gov. Schwarzenegger in California, Gov. Rendell in Pennsylvania, Gov. Crist in Florida, Gov. Paterson in New York, all are ready to put forward a match if Illinois drops the ball on the 5-yard line," the north suburban GOP congressman said.

The money has been in the federal budget waiting to go to Illinois since 2005. But Gov. Blagojevich, state House Speaker Michael Madigan (D-Chicago) and other leaders in Springfield have tangled over how to finance the state's portion of the tab to build roads, schools and other projects. Blagojevich has blamed Madigan for refusing to discuss options.

"If [Madigan] comes to the table, of course it can be done," Blagojevich spokeswoman Katie Ridgway said.

Madigan spokesman Steve Brown responded, "They still have a bill that is opposed by the city of Chicago. . . . They still have a lack of safeguards for the projects so people know how the money will be properly spent."

Brown said Illinois' strong congressional delegation should be able to delay efforts to take the \$9 billion if negotiations drag on past October.

This article was edited to comply with Franking Commission guidelines.